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THE
PLOTTER

CLACKAMAS COUNTY AREA T/S
USERS GROUP
NEWS LETTER

VOLUME 6 ** NUMBER 9

SEPTEMBER 1988

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MEETING

The SEPTEMBER meeting will be:

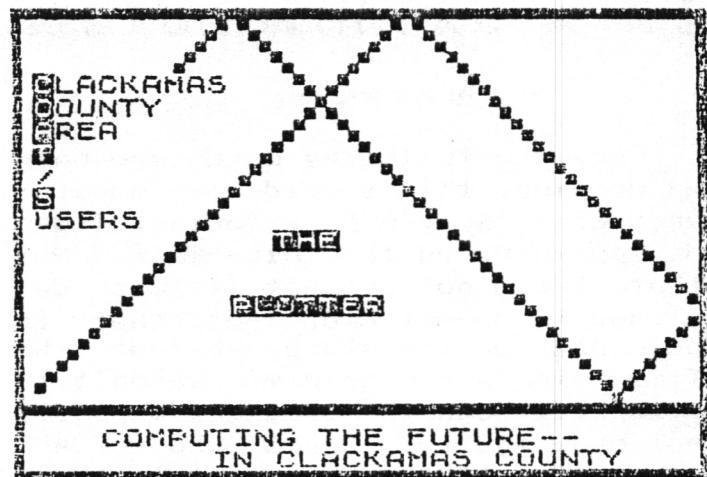
on: FRI., SEPTEMBER 9 1988

meeting room open at: 7:30 P.M.

in: COMMUNITY ROOM
FAR WEST FEDERAL S & L
OREGON CITY SHOPPING CENTER

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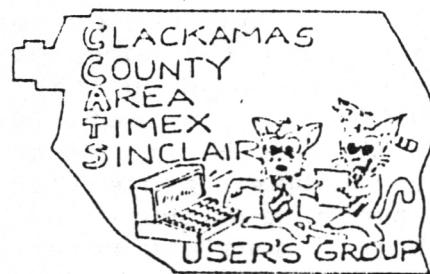


SOAP BOX

The event of the year has come and gone! Thanks to everyone who put in their share (and more). It was disappointing that more people did not attend. Of course those who did not attend missed out the most, though we all lost something by the smaller than anticipated turn-out. However, there was plenty to do and many new Sinclairites to share ideas with. I certainly had my hands full talking to all of the new people who showed up. For the first time I was able to put real faces to some of the names I have known over the years. It was a pleasure to meet, once again, our fellow users from up North, and I am looking forward to next year's gathering of the Timex/Sinclair Northwest Clan!

A few tid-bits: I am pleased to see more "traffic" by CCAT/S members on RMG's BBS, do Drop-In. Amstrad is trying to market their IBM compatible with the SINCLAIR name and logo (well there goes the neighborhood!). A new line of modems has come out which do not use the phone lines, they have built-in radio receivers & transmitters.

Sinclairly -- Michael E. Carver



REFLECTIONS IN A JAUNDICED EYE

by Jack Armstrong

Since the following words are only my opinion, this should be considered as a "sort of" editorial. I was disappointed by the Mini-Fair. Not that it did not do what it was designed to do--it did. But that is only part of the story. What of the Timex/Sinclair people who weren't in evidence. Both the speakers who did not show and the Users who didn't come. After the efforts put forth by our group and Rod Gowen and Mike Carver and Tim Woods and--and--and.

There were dedicated people there: the Vista Group was there with a neat little display. Sharps was there, Ed Grey was there with an impressive display digitizing and then printing your picture if you would sit still long enough. Ed Fry was there with his huge layout turning and blinking and flashing. There was Rod with a huge inventory of good stuff for the faithful. Tim Woods was there with special items, Nigel Searles was there with the Z88. Even Zebra was there in spirit with some bargains--even though the nice lady didn't know anything about what she was selling. JACK DOHANY was there and patiently answered questions and configured programs for the eager. I have a reason for putting his name in CAPS--later. Vince Lyon was there with definite opinions.

Wilf Rigter and his compadres were there. SEATUG and VTUG were there & FOOTE was there (in spirit, anyway).

There were people there--just not enough people. How did we fail? Was it that we did not get the word out? How do you get the word out? Aren't flyers, posters, articles, telephone calls, word of mouth and planning enough? If the tenor of the round-table discussion is any indication, then the fact is that we are in a shrink cycle that has robbed us of the rank and file: the hobbyist who loves to piddle around on his 2068 or Z81 and doesn't tire of finding new things to do with it. Vince Lyon was vehement about protection for the programmer/developer, so that his work brings monetary reward. If we keep shrinking, there won't be

any programs or applications or new stuff to attach to the edge connector. The programmer won't have anyone to program for. Ed Grey has vowed to help all he can to preserve the Sinclair/Timex community. We all need to give him all the help and support that we can--write him. Jack Dohany is working hard on improvements to software for our machines--support him. Rod Gowen has, and is, continuing to keep the hardware and software coming--support him. Stan Lempke, Wilf Rigter, Mike de Sosa & others continue to develop "stuff" for our pet beasties--support them.

Tim Woods & Bill Jones with their mags, Time Designs and UpDates are keeping us informed--subscribe! It's true that I've left out a lot of information on people and groups and software writers and hardware makers and you'll have to forgive me--the message is still the same. If we are to continue to enjoy what has developed into a great, if exclusive, society of T-S'ers we have to come together and support each other. No one else is going to do it for us. Earlier, I referred to Jack Dohany; I have a selfish reason: I've come to regard him as, at least, a minor genius and hope Larken users can influence Kenny Larken to release the Source Code of his LKDOS to Jack so that some of the sort of work that has improved M-Script greatly, can be applied to the Larken system. It is my opinion that this move can bring a wider sales base for the system. I think it's the greatest thing since sliced bread, but realize that it could be improved.

The seminar that Nigel Searles gave was mildly interesting--keep in mind that I have no use for a laptop or portable of any sort--but the Z88 is an ingenious machine. Jack Dohany gave two talks and I was able to be in on one--a sort of free-for-all ask-me-anything exchange. Jack has a lot of patience and a lack of "don't ask me silly questions" attitude. I can only say: Thanks, Jack!

To sum up: I enjoyed myself. I wish more people had participated. I hope next year we have a better turn-out. Those are simplifications, of course, but we must stick together and help each other. Keep supporting the writers, the designers, the publishers and come to meetings.

BITS & BYTES

by: ROD GOWEN

Heard any TS related news lately? Did you get any information in the mail from other users, user groups, or vendors that may be of interest to our readers? If so, why not share it with us? We need all of the help that we can get. Please send any info that you might have to: Rod Gowen, C/O CCAT/S, 1419 1/2 7th Street, Oregon City, OR 97045, or, phone in at: 503/655-7484, 10 AM- 10 PM weekdays. I know that the entire user group will appreciate it!

A+ COMPUTER RESPONSE-told this reporter at the Mini-Fair that they were completely sold out of QL packages. They had reserved 50 for our Fair and 50 for the Cleveland Conference. It now appears that there are only a few dealers left with any QLs. Both Sharp's and RMG have stock left and have announced that the new selling price is \$149.95 plus shipping for the complete package.

RAM CHIPS-are coming down in price again. Very slowly, but coming down! The current price on 43256 chips for the Larken Ramdisk are now selling for about \$16-19 as opposed to \$18-20 just a month or two ago. They will more than likely be coming down even more in months to come.

TIME DESIGNS MAGAZINE-has a new look! If you haven't seen an issue for a while, you will like the new look. Many new graphics designs by Ralph Hammer of the Las Vegas group. Not only is the cover better, but we think that the material is getting better and more interesting all the time! Keep up the good work, Tim!

Again, I am out of time and must go for now. Be sure to send in or call in any news that may be of interest so that we can print it.

Till next time.....

LARKEN DOS

Try this after initializing, type in RANDOMIZE USR 100: NEW

MINI-FAIR NEWS

by: ROD GOWEN

FINAL REPORT

Now that the Mini-Fair is over, I felt it necessary to write one last column on the subject.

We had such high hopes for this Fair. We could not have done anything more to promote and publicize it. However, in the end, it turned out to be a terrific letdown! We had the huge turnout of about 150 people, including vendors!

I will not dwell on the fact that the turnout was so low, beyond making the statement that I would have expected more from the TS users of North America. When the outcry goes up from the users at large asking "Where is our support?", they need look no farther than the mirror. If they do not give support, they cannot expect much in return.

On the brighter side, I want to thank those who did support the effort. We were very pleased to have MARK STUEBER of SHARP'S INC, ED GREY of ED GREY ENTERPRISES, BOB WILSON, JR of QUANTUM MECHANIC, NIGEL SEARLE or SSI INC (CAMBRIDGE Z88), ZEBRA SYSTEMS, TIME DESIGNS MAGAZINE, JACK DOHANY of FairWare fame and RMG ENTERPRISE as vendors. I also want to thank VASHON ISLAND SINCLAIR TIMEX ASSOCIATION from Vashon, Wa., VANCOUVER SINCLAIR USER GROUP of Vancouver, B. C., SEATTLE TIMEX USERS GROUP or Seattle, Wa., LAS VEGAS T/S USERS GROUP or Las Vegas, Nv., CAPITOL AREA TIMEX SINCLAIR USERS of the Washington, DC area, TRIANGLE USERS GROUP of North Carolina and CLACKAMAS COUNTY AREA T/S USERS GROUP of Oregon. All of these fine folks and organizations made the effort through work and monetary contributions to support the affair. Many door prizes were donated by these folks and A+ Computer Response even donated a complete QL Package as Grand prize. I hope that the winners were pleased and I believe that all those who made the effort and attended the Fair were winners!

I must admit that perhaps we were a bit over-confident in our estimates as to attendance for the Fair, BUT, if all those to whom I and Tim Woods had spoken in the past months who had said to us "Oh yes! I will definitely be there!", had shown up, we would most certainly have at least have made the break-even point for the Fair expenses. We do know that things come up to change plans, but we are still disappointed when they do.

The response to this great effort almost certainly ends any chance for another Fair of this type to be promoted in the NW. Our get-together for 1989 will most certainly be no more than a large user group meeting for the NW area groups. It is tentatively planned for the Vancouver, B.C. or northern Washington area and is to be hosted and planned by the Vancouver, B.C. group. If I or any of our group can be of help to them, we will do our best.

Again, A HEARTY THANKS TO THOSE WHO HELPED IN ANY WAY AND TO THOSE WHO MADE THE EFFORT AND ATTENDED from myself, as producer and from CCAT/S as hosts.

OUR HATS ARE OFF TO YOU ALL!

-SPECIAL NOTICE-

At the round-table discussion during the NW Mini-Fair it was suggested that the Timex community form a national BBS/Electronic means of communication. The following is a "draft" of the announcement I prepared for Ed Grey (it was posted on RMG's BBS where Ed obtained a copy).

To all dedicated Timex/Sinclair users

For Immediate Release

As our user base seems to be dwindling, we may have reached a stasis. How can we continue to survive? Where can we turn for support and sustenance? Who will come to our aid as we strive to survive?

Even if you feel that your local user base is dying, nation-wide we are still STRONG! Now is the time to act. Various efforts have and are being made to form a Sinclair/Timex Northamerican Users Group (SNUG). They need your support. But this will take time and major finances to get off the ground. What can we do NOW?

It was suggested at the recent Mini-Fair in Portland to create an electronic network to help in uniting T/S users nation-wide. The tools already exist, our computers, modems, BBS's, local users groups, and motivated individuals. The goal is simple, provide a TIMELY means of communicating and organizing our efforts across the nation.

Ed Grey, of Ed Grey Enterprises, has offered to help launch the needed National Electronic-Network for Timex/Sinclair (NET). But he will need all of our help. The plan calls for local users to post articles, announcements, open letters, etc. on their local T/S BBS. These postings will be gathered once a month and compiled into a national newsletter to be uploaded to all T/S BBS's. This newsletter can then be downloaded by local users groups and included in their regular newsletter for distribution. Our goal is to be in contact with all BBS's within reach of PC-Pursuit. This will provide a timely means of communicating with all T/S users nation-wide, at the lowest possible expense. There is even the possibility of distributing software through such a network.

Through the NET we can unite all of our users and forge ahead with a unified voice and vision.

It is not our intention to usurp the goals of SNUG, but to enhance its growth, and help provide an inexpensive means of national communication.

If you support or would like to participate in the creation of NET please contact Ed Grey on the Grey Matter BBS (213) 971-6260 or by mail

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at P.O. Box 2186, Inglewood, CA 90305. Please let us know that we can count on your support. We need your feedback!

Sinclairly -- Michael E. Carver,
Portland, OR

APATHY - THE GREAT USER GROUP KILLER!

by: ROD GOWEN

APATHY-the greatest enemy we have to overcome if we are to continue as a viable supporting group for the TS computers. If APATHY gets the upper hand, we are finished!

We all know how easy it is to "let the other guy do it". In every special interest group, there are a few people who seem to act a "spark plugs" and keep the engine running. What, then, happens when one or more of these people "burn out" or become tired of carrying the load by themselves? The group dies! Just as an engine with fouled spark plugs cannot run, a group without "spark" cannot continue to go on.

Next question: How do we "rejuvinate" the group? How do we replace the "spark plugs" and restart the "engine"?

The other problem, more important in my eyes, is the rest of the group. In many cases, after a few months or years the members tend to lose interest or find new interests that take more and more of the time that they formerly devoted to our common interests. They have short bursts of interest in their computers at which time they call for help with a project on their computer and come running to the one place they are sure they will find answers. In fact, THE ONLY PLACE THEY CAN FIND ANSWERS! The users group!

We have seen many of these people ourselves over the past years. For arguments sake, let us suppose that 90% of all users were in this catagory. That would mean that 10% of the group is carrying the load. If that 10% gets tired of doing so,

they may not be there for the 90%. When that time arrives, the group is effectively "dead"! A users group is just that: A USERS GROUP!! It cannot and WILL NOT survive without input from ALL MEMBERS! The newsletter cannot be written and published by 1 person for very long. A library cannot be run efficiently by 1 person. If you, the TS users of the area, want a place to get help and information when you need it, YOU WILL HAVE TO HELP ALL OF THE TIME, NOT JUST WHEN IT SUITS YOUR NEEDS!!!

The same goes for your TS vendors. If you, the users, do not support the vendors and producers of software and hardware, you will not find them when you need them. They will have moved on to more appreciative customers. We MUST show our support by trying new products, writing to them to express our thanks for their continued support, give them our ideas and needs so that they can try to supply us with what we want and need. I know that you have heard this song before and are probably tired of it, but it is still true.

If you are lucky enough to have a users group in your area, SUPPORT IT! If you are lucky enough to have a computer show or fair held in your area, ATTEND IT! If you can't attend, the least you can do is buy a ticket as a show of support. A recent experience in our area showed me just how much people appreciate the work and time that goes into keeping a group going and putting together a computer fair. There will always be that small core of users who rush to the cause and a few more who will make minimal efforts to help support such an undertaking, as long as it doesn't interfere with something "more important". There are also those who, when first approached with the idea are eager to help or to attend, but as the time draws near, things come up and plans get changed so that they are, at the crucial moment, unable to make it, or can't make it. This is one way to insure that no such happenings occur in your area again!

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If you have not gotten the message of my retoric yet, it is simply this:

SUPPORT YOUR GROUP AND ITS WORK!!

Without you, it is nothing!

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Certainly the N.W. Fair dealers were more than fair to customers with their explanations and descriptions of equipment and programs. In some cases there was lots of talk with few sales. Hopefully more sales will come later, now that many in attendance met some of the dealers for the first time. Too bad that some dealers didn't show as we all lost out for their not being there. Those who just sent items to be sold made it seem like buying by the label.

UP-DATE magazine sent copies of the latest issue to be given away. Almost 50 % of those in attendance took advantage of this offer which is pretty good considering same already subscribe. As far as I could make out, Bill Jones should pick up some more subscribers, based on this generous contribution.

TIME DESIGNS magazine had the July/August issue at their booth so subscribers could pick up their copies. That took a lot of work as I understand there was a printer problem. Prospective subscribers had the opportunity to purchase back issues to get a good idea of just how good this magazine is.

There were 4 user groups with active displays which gave those in attendance a hint about what holds user groups together. The Seattle SEATUG and Vancouver Sinclair UG (VSUG) had adjoining booths with lots of active programs running. At the other end of the hall the newcomer user group, Vashon Island UG had 2 very active members operating equipment, mainly TS 1000 oriented. They have a library project that is very ambitious.

At this time the library tapes (5) are limited to TS 1000 applications. They have about 225 public domain programs that make up these 5 tapes. For \$4.00 they will send a tape of 50-70 programs (depending on program lengths). An index and order form can be obtained from Tim Ward, 5142-D, Gingo Dr. SW, Tacoma, WA 98439. Be sure and send a stamped envelope as these fellows are on zero profit with this operation.

Our own group was located next to Vashon Island UG and we had 5 active computers in operation. We ranged from a TS 1000 operated "oak nut" that was in continuous operation (at times) as a robotic operation to a full color stock market program with lots of graphic displays. Ed Fry had a good idea in using a 5" TV as one monitor as it sure takes less space and would be much easier to tote around.

The seminars covered a wide range of subjects that drew a varied number of interested participants. Nagel Searle had a full house for his discussion of the Cambridge Z88 lap type computer. There was plenty of opportunity to bring up points for discussion. It is obvious that Nagel has to get the word out about this little jewel as I just read in the Puget Sound Computer User publication that Computers + Store carry the smallest, lightest portable PC (so the ad says), the Toshiba T1000 at 6.4 pounds for \$789. It does have a 3.5" disk drive.

For myself, my talk on printer graphics programming was prefaced (to kill time while Rod Gowen got the TV camera going) by an explanation of how to overcome that poorly designed 2068 space bar operation. See the article in this issue on this simple fix. The next day Bob Evans explained how easy it was for him to accomplish this. In his case he used 4 strips of paper as shims in place of the 3 that I used. Now he has complete key operation when pressing the bar at any point.

EASY KEYBOARD FIX

Dick F. Wagner

The 2068 computer has a poorly designed space bar as usually the right hand end does not produce a space when pressed. I have explained to users about how to make a fix by disassembling the keyboard and inserting spacers between the hinge arms and the case to slightly lower the space bar and reduce its travel. This is not easy to accomplish and requires removing the plastic keyboard overlay.

Here is an extremely easy solution to the problem that does not require entering the case, or even disconnecting the cables or plug-ins. One needs only a bright light, scissors, some note paper in weight like 3M adhesive notes, and tweezers or needle nose pliers.

Inspect the space bar arrangement with a bright light and see how it moves. With the computer on, try pressing slightly on the left end and at the same time press the right end. The repeat should come on. Turn off the computer and note the gap between the back of the space bar and the case, and see the two parts about 1/8 inch wide and 5/8 inch from each end that move within two slots. This is where the improvement is made. The arms are hinged about 1 inch back of the space bar.

The reason for the poor key action is that there are 2 contacts under the space bar that are too close together, plus the flexibility of the arms that do not force the key to move fully no matter where pressed. The springs under the keys are just rubber dimples that "turn inside out" when pressed. A hard button on the top of each makes the actual switch contact. This is all a 1 piece rubber assembly that seals the contacts from dirt.

The fix is simple--just lower the space bar about 15 thousands of an inch. Cut some 1/8 inch wide strips from the note paper which is about 0.004 inch thick (don't use

the adhesive end if 3M paper is used). Cut 2 lengths about 3/4 inch long and 2 lengths about 3/8 inch long. Fold the longer strips at the mid length in a tight fold. Insert a short piece in each folded strip. At the folded end bend the 3 layer paper pieces in a right angle bend 1/8 inch from the fold. At the loose end bend very slightly in the same direction at a point about 1/16 inch from the end.

With good light on, press the space bar fully and gripping the paper spacer (open end down and the right angle bent end away from you) insert it between the space bar and the case, directly over an arm. The slight bend on the end is to make it easier to slide the paper between the arm and the case. Slide the paper down to the bend point, leaving the folded end protruding slightly higher than the case proper. This makes it easier to retrieve the spacers if necessary. The right angle bend in the spacer keeps the spacer from slipping too far and it also keeps it from slipping sideways. If the strip ever does slip inside the case no damage can occur as all contacts are sealed.

Warning--as the rubber "springs" are not powerful try not to bend the open end of the paper spacer very much as the spacer may not flatten properly and the spacer will effectively be too thick.

Test and see the improvement. If your space bar is not fully fixed and requires excessive pressure on the end, remove the strips and add another 3/8 inch insert. It would be better to make a new set than to try to work with the old set because of the bends. One user of this fix found that 4 thicknesses worked better than 3. There are differences in hardware so try a combination that works. It takes only a few minutes!

FLOWER BASKET

Dick F. Wagner

Please refer to the article on page 10 of the Special Edition of THE PLOTTER. Line 1 is applicable to OLIGER printer interface driver. Takes the place of OUT 127,n and allows the use of LPRINT. Printer commands are applicable to Epson workalike printers. Line 230 produces a line feed. Line 240 sends READ to line 260 on negative numbers. Then P READS the number following this number. It repeats until there are no more negative numbers then goes back to READ N. Saves duplicating DATA. In this program this procedure prints empty spaces. Lines 240, 260, and 270 is a subroutine for STRING\$ available on some other computers. This program is for 8 bit printer mode and will not work on 2040 printers. See the article in March-April issue of SYNCWARE NEWS for printing with the 2040.

```
10 LET /P=0: POKE 23300,60: PO  
KE 23301,0  
100 LPRINT CHR$ 27;"1"  
210 LET R$=CHR$ 27+"K"+CHR$ 34+  
CHR$ 9  
220 FOR K=1 TO 4: LPRINT R$;  
230 READ N: IF N=999 THEN GO TO  
280  
240 IF N<0 THEN GO TO 260  
250 LPRINT CHR$ N;  
260 READ P: FOR J=1 TO -N: LPRI  
NT CHR$ P: : NEXT J  
270 GO TO 230
```

```
280 LPRINT : NEXT K  
300 DATA -14,0,3,12,32,108,32,1  
2,3,-12,0,0,999  
310 DATA 0,3,6,6,14,6,2,34,49,1  
03,31,13,1,1,255,14,23,29,22,29,  
255,0,43,14,55,59,24,2,6,14,4,6,  
3,0,999  
320 DATA 224,32,0,0,14,49,64,20  
0,216,240,152,184,180,218,213,18  
6,245,186,21,250,213,218,20,184,  
216,176,88,200,64,50,14,0,32,224  
,999  
330 DATA 0,-4,0,128,128,0,-4,0,  
2,6,62,202,62,202,62,202,62,6,2,  
0,-10,0,999
```

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